

## End Times Prophecy

02.16.22

### The Beast out of the Sea ([Revelation 13:1-10](#))

*And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear.*

*If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. ([13:1-10](#))*

In the chaotic times of confusion, uncertainty, and unrest that will prevail during the Tribulation, the world will long for a leader. People will be desperately hoping for someone powerful and influential to unite the divided and contentious nations of the world; someone to bring hope in the midst of helplessness; someone to provide a sense of security in an unsettled time of apprehension and fear. People will be desperately seeking a strong, charismatic, authoritative leader to pull the world back from the brink of disaster.

Those longings will be fulfilled. The powerful leader people desire will come and unify the world under his rule. He will appear at first to be everything people thought they were looking for. And for a brief time he will bring peace and prosperity. But he will turn out to be far more than the world bargained for. He will be a dictator more cruel and powerful than any other leader the world has ever known. This man, often called the Antichrist, will be the culmination of a long line of would-be world conquerors. What men like Alexander the Great and the Roman emperors in ancient times and Hitler and Stalin in modern times only dreamed of doing, the Antichrist actually will do—he will rule the entire world and receive its worship.

Just as the Antichrist will be the culmination of a long line of political rulers, so also will he be the ultimate false religious leader. In the broadest sense, an "antichrist [is any] one who denies the Father and the Son" ([1 John 2:22](#)), because one who does "not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh... is the deceiver and the antichrist" ([2 John 7](#)). Such charlatans have been around throughout human history; in the first century the apostle John lamented that "even now many antichrists have appeared" ([1 John 2:18](#); cf. [1 John 4:3](#)). But the Bible predicts that the end times will see an unprecedented proliferation of false christs

and antichrists. Jesus warned, "Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He!' and will mislead many... [I]f anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ'; or, 'Behold, He is there'; do not believe him; for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect" ([Mark 13:6, 21-22](#)). Those satanic impostors will culminate in the final Antichrist, who will be more vile, evil, and powerful than all the rest.

The astounding description of the Antichrist presented in the opening verses of this chapter is the most gripping, thorough, and dramatic one in all of Scripture. However, it was not new teaching to John's readers. John wrote in his first epistle that his readers had "heard that antichrist is coming" ([1 John 2:18](#)). After describing Antichrist and his activity, the apostle Paul reminded the Thessalonians, "Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?" ([2 Thess. 2:5](#)). Those passages indicate that the truth about Antichrist was common knowledge in New Testament times.

The original source of the biblical teaching about the Antichrist is the book of Daniel. [Daniel 7](#) pictures the Antichrist as a little horn ([v. 8](#)), arising from the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel's vision. That horn represents a person, since it "possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts" ([v. 8](#)). Earlier in that verse, Daniel notes that "three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before [Antichrist]," indicating that he will destroy three of the other rulers (cf. [v. 24](#)) and subjugate the rest during his rise to power.

Later in [chapter 7](#), Daniel saw that the "horn [Antichrist] was waging war with the saints and overpowering them" ([v. 21](#)). Antichrist is seen leading a savage persecution of God's people "until the Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom" ([v. 22](#)). Daniel described Antichrist's kingdom (a revived Roman Empire) as one "which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" ([v. 23](#)). As previously noted, Antichrist, unlike other tyrants in human history, will rule the entire world. In [verse 25](#) Daniel said that Antichrist "will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time." This counterfeit Christ will, as previously noted, persecute God's people. He will also institute a new religion (the worship of himself; cf. [Dan. 11:36-37](#); [2 Thess. 2:4](#)), a reign of evil, and will rewrite history to suit his purposes. Helping him do so will be his associate, the false prophet (see the discussion of [13:11-18](#) in [chapter 5](#) of this volume).

[Daniel 8:23b-25](#) gives another glimpse of Antichrist and his reign of terror:

"A king will arise,

Insolent and skilled in intrigue.

His power will be mighty, but not by his own power,

And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree

And prosper and perform his will;

He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.

And through his shrewdness

He will cause deceit to succeed by his influence;

And he will magnify himself in his heart,

And he will destroy many while they are at ease.

He will even oppose the Prince of princes,

But he will be broken without human agency."

He will be an insolent intimidator, devious, possessing a power not his own, a fierce destroyer of his victims, and so arrogant that he will dare even to "oppose the Prince of princes" (cf. [v. 11](#)), who is the Lord Christ. That move will prove fatal, however, and God's power will fall on Antichrist, who "will be broken without human agency."

Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks describes Antichrist as "the prince who is to come" ([Dan. 9:26](#)). He

"will destroy the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." ([Dan. 9:26-27](#))

Antichrist will make a pact with Israel for seven years. Halfway through that seven-year period, however, he will break that covenant and attack the Jewish people. His plan will be to wipe them out, so that God's promised kingdom cannot come. Antichrist's assault will also include believing Gentiles, as he seeks to destroy all believers.

Another important passage regarding Antichrist and his career is found in [Daniel 11:36-45](#):

"Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.

"At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will

not escape. But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels. But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him."

According to this prophecy, Antichrist will have absolute power; he "will do as he pleases." As the leader of a worldwide false religion, he "will exalt and magnify himself above every god... He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers... nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all" ([vv. 36-37](#)). Worse, his arrogant pride will lead him to blasphemy, and he "will speak monstrous things against the God of gods." Like his evil master, Satan, Antichrist will be blasphemous, profane, and proud. But also like his master, "he will come to his end, and no one will help him."

In addition to Daniel's prophecy, the original readers of Revelation had information about the Antichrist from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. In [Matthew 24:15-16](#), Jesus quoted Daniel's prophecy about Antichrist, warning those alive in that day "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."

Another source of information about the Antichrist available to John's readers was the book of 2 Thessalonians, written several decades earlier. The apostle Paul describes the Antichrist in words reminiscent of Daniel's prophecy:

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. ([2 Thess. 2:3-10](#))

In that passage, Paul clearly delineated Antichrist's character, describing Him as the "man of lawlessness... the son of destruction" ([v. 3](#)). He also described Antichrist's wicked career. When Antichrist "takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God," he will break his covenant with Israel, and commit the abomination of desolation that both Daniel ([Dan. 11:31](#)) and Jesus ([Matt. 24:15](#)) warned about. After deceiving the world into worshipping him during the last half of the Tribulation "with all power and signs and false wonders," Antichrist will be destroyed. The "Lord will slay [Antichrist] with the breath of His mouth and bring [him] to an end by the appearance of His coming" (cf. [19:11-21](#)).

Though [chapter 13](#) gives the most detailed description of Antichrist in Revelation, this is not his first appearance in the Apocalypse. Antichrist was introduced in [11:7](#) as the "beast" who will assault and kill God's two witnesses. His wicked career, which began in [chapter 11](#), is fully developed beginning in [chapter 13](#).

[Chapter 12](#) records the beginning of Satan's long war against God and His people; [chapter 13](#) follows logically to record that war's culmination. In [chapter 12](#) Satan is seen being cast from heaven to earth; in [chapter 13](#) he is described beginning his massive effort on earth to defeat God and His purposes. Satan will try to prevent Jesus Christ from setting up His earthly kingdom by setting up his own under Antichrist.

As a spirit being, Satan depends on humans to carry out his evil plans on earth. He controls all unbelievers; since they are "of [their] father the devil, and [want] to do the desires of [their] father" ([John 8:44](#)), and walk "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" ([Eph. 2:2](#)).

But some humans have been (and are) under Satan's (or his demons') direct control. For example, Satan used Judas to betray Jesus to His death. In the terrifying words of [Luke 22:3](#), "Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve." During His earthly ministry, Jesus showed His mastery over Satan by casting demons out of people. He also delegated power over the demonic realm to the apostles, to aid them as they confronted Satan's kingdom ([Mark 3:14-15](#)). By so doing, He and the apostles not only freed people from demonic bondage, but also hindered Satan from carrying out his earthly agenda.

Having been cast permanently from heaven ([12:9](#)), Satan will know that the time remaining to him is brief ([12:12](#)). To lead his last, desperate onslaught against God, he will empower his final Antichrist. The opening verses of this chapter reveal seven features of this ultimate dictator: his ancestry, authority, acclaim, adoration, arrogance, activity, and admirers.

## His Ancestry

*And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. ([13:1](#))*

The first sentence of this chapter belongs as the last sentence of [chapter 12](#), since it concludes the account of **the dragon** (Satan; cf. [12:9](#)) and his war against God and His people. While some Greek manuscripts read "I stood," the older and more reliable ones read "he stood." In the 1994 and 1995 texts of the *New American Standard Bible*, the translators inserted the phrase **the dragon** in place of "he," since **the dragon** is the antecedent of the verb translated "he stood." The imagery of the **sand of the seashore** depicts the nations of the world (cf. [20:8](#)). In John's vision, Satan takes his place dominantly in their midst as if they were his rightful possession. But in reality, he is a usurper who seeks the world's worship and adoration.

As John's vision unfolded, **the dragon** summoned the Antichrist, described as **a beast coming up out of the sea**. *Thērion* (**beast**) is also used to describe Antichrist in [11:7](#). It does not refer to a domesticated animal, but to a wild, savage, vicious monster, thus describing

Antichrist as a ferocious and rapacious personality. The **beast** must be understood as representing both a kingdom and a person. The **beast** must represent a kingdom, because of the complex description of him in the latter half of [verse 1](#). Yet the **beast** must also represent a person, since he is always described with personal pronouns (e.g., "his," "him," "he"; cf. [vv. 1-8](#); [14:9](#), [11](#); [15:2](#); [16:2](#), [10](#)). Daniel ([Dan. 7:25](#); [8:24-25](#); [11:36-45](#)) and Paul ([2 Thess. 2:4](#)) also describe the Antichrist as a person. In this manner, Scripture views the final world empire as inseparable from its ruler, much as Hitler is inseparably linked to the Third Reich.

There has been much discussion about what the **sea** symbolizes. Some argue, based on such passages as [Isaiah 17:12](#), [57:20](#), and [Revelation 17:15](#), that it refers to the Gentile nations. But since [11:7](#) and [17:8](#) state that the **beast** comes up out of the abyss, it is best to equate the **sea** with the abyss. That interpretation is in harmony with the Old Testament, which also uses the metaphor of the sea to picture the realm of satanic activity (cf. [Job 26:12](#); [Pss. 74:13-14](#); [89:9-10](#); [Isa. 27:1](#)). Some of the demons are currently incarcerated in the abyss (cf. [9:1-11](#); [Luke 8:31](#)), and Satan will be imprisoned in that abyss during the millennial kingdom ([20:1-3](#)).

The Antichrist will be a man ([2 Thess. 2:4](#)), but at some point in his life, he will be indwelt by a powerful demon from the abyss. This demon-possessed man will be a gifted orator, an intellectual genius, possess great charm and charisma, and have immense leadership power. Added to those natural qualities will be the hellish power of Satan. The result will be a person of superhuman power, vast intelligence, and consummate wickedness.

While all unbelievers are children of Satan ([John 8:44](#)), no one in human history will be more completely the devil's child than the Antichrist. His "family likeness" to Satan becomes strikingly apparent from John's description of him as **having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems**. That same grotesque description was applied to Satan in [12:3](#): "Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems." The description of Antichrist emphasizes the importance of the **ten horns** by mentioning them first and associating the **diadems** with them instead of the heads.

**Horns** in Scripture symbolize strength and power, both for attack and defense (cf. [1 Sam. 2:1](#), [10](#); [2 Sam. 22:3](#); [Job 16:15](#); [Pss. 18:2](#); [75:4-5](#); [89:17](#), [24](#); [92:10](#); [112:9](#); [Jer. 48:25](#); [Mic. 4:13](#)). In this passage, they represent the great power of the kings who will rule under Antichrist's absolute authority. **Ten** fits the imagery of the fourth beast in [Daniel 7:7](#), [24](#), and is a symbolic number representing all the world's political and military might. Antichrist will rise from among these ten ([Dan. 7:16-24](#)) and will not rule merely ten nations, but the entire world (cf. [Dan. 7:23](#)). Unlike the seven **heads**, which represent successive world empires, all of the rulers symbolized by the **ten horns** will rule at the same time (cf. [17:12](#)).

Daniel described this final coalition, headed by Antichrist, in [Daniel 2:41-44](#):

"In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. And in that you saw the iron mixed with

common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery. In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."

The final world empire will be in some sense a revival of the Roman Empire (the iron legs and ten toes of the statue in [Daniel 2](#)), but will far exceed it both in power and extent. It will be much more than a European confederacy; it will cover the entire world. Ultimately, Antichrist's empire will be crushed by Christ (the "stone [that] was cut out without hands"; [Dan. 2:34, 45](#)) when He comes to establish His earthly kingdom.

In addition to his ten horns, the beast is described by John as having **seven heads**. As will be seen in the [discussion of Revelation 17](#) later in this volume, those seven heads represent seven successive world empires: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Antichrist's final world kingdom. The **ten diadems** (royal crowns) indicate the horns' regal authority and victorious power. John also noted that on the beast's **heads were blasphemous names**. Like many of the Roman emperors and other monarchs before them, these rulers will blasphemously arrogate divine names and titles to themselves that dishonor the true and living God. They will follow the pattern of their master, Antichrist, "who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" ([2 Thess. 2:4](#)).

### **His Authority**

*And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. ([13:2](#))*

As John looked more closely at the **beast**, he **saw** that it incorporated the characteristics of the animals from the vision recorded in [Daniel 7:3-7](#):

"And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!' After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it. After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."

The **leopard**, **bear**, and **lion** were well-known in Palestine. They dramatically emphasize the characteristics of the nations they represent. The **lion** was a fitting symbol for the fierce, consuming power of the Babylonian Empire. The ferocity, strength, and stability of the Medo-Persian Empire led to its depiction as a **bear**. The Greeks' swift conquests, particularly under

the mercurial Alexander the Great, reflect the speed and viciousness of the **leopard**. John lists the three animals in reverse order from Daniel, since he was looking backward in time. Daniel, looking forward in time, listed the animals and the kingdoms they represent in chronological order.

Like the indescribable fourth beast of [Daniel 7:7](#), which represents the Roman Empire, Antichrist's final empire will be a composite of the empires that preceded it. It will incorporate all the ferocity, viciousness, swiftness, and strength of the other world empires. This powerful empire, unparalleled in human history, will be Satan's last and greatest attempt to stop the reign of Christ. But, like all Satan's other attempts to thwart God's purposes, it will ultimately fail.

Because the **dragon** (Satan) is the source of Antichrist's **power**, no human force will be able to withstand him. **The dragon** works his **power** through **the beast**, using him to make war against God. Nor will the holy angels intervene, because God's supernatural restraint of Antichrist will be removed ([2 Thess. 2:7](#)). That will allow Antichrist to rise to power at God's appointed time, and will temporarily let sin run its course. The Antichrist will share Satan's **throne** (cf. [2:13](#)), just as the true Christ shares His Father's throne (cf. [3:21](#); [22:1](#), [3](#)). Antichrist will possess **great authority** over the entire world; he will have complete, unrestrained freedom of action and will answer to no one.

Some find it incredible that anyone could rise to such a position of absolute authority. But there are parallels in human history, albeit on a much smaller scale. Inevitably, turmoil in society aids such a ruler's rise to power. Dictators gain control by offering solutions to society's seemingly unsolvable problems. Adolf Hitler, for example, took advantage of the chaotic economic and political conditions in Germany following World War I. He promised the German people that, under his leadership, their downtrodden nation would again rise to a place of prominence, power, and wealth. Desperate for a way out of their dilemma, many people believed his message. Eventually, the Nazi party grew so strong that Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany. From that position he went on to seize absolute power. Antichrist, a dictator more powerful and evil than Hitler, will rise to power amid the frightening and unprecedented chaos of the Tribulation.

## His Acclaim

*I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; ([13:3](#))*

A startling event will help Antichrist solidify his hold on the world. John saw **one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed**. The interpretation of that phrase has been much debated. Some commentators argue that the head whose fatal wound was healed was a kingdom that will have been destroyed and restored. They see the death and resurrection miracle as the revival of the Roman Empire. Antichrist, they believe, will unite the countries occupying the territory of the ancient Roman Empire into a new empire. That revival of power will so amaze the rest of the nations that they will also submit to his rule.

There are several difficulties with that view, however. The most obvious problem is that while [verse 3](#) speaks of **one** of the **heads** being **slain**, other passages specify that the beast



himself is slain ([13:12](#), [14](#); [17:8](#), [11](#)). The personal pronoun in the phrase **his fatal wound** also indicates that one of the kings is in view, not the empire as a whole. Nor does it seem likely that merely reviving the Roman Empire would cause the worldwide astonishment and wonder mentioned in this verse. Finally, the phrase **as if... slain** is used in [5:6](#) of the Lord Jesus Christ, implying that it is also used of a person in this passage.

Granting that it is a person who dies and is restored to life, the question remains as to the identity of that person. The view that it will be the resurrected Judas Iscariot has little to commend it. That idea is based on the fact that Judas ([John 17:12](#)) and Antichrist ([2 Thess. 2:3](#)) are both called "son of perdition [or destruction]," and that Jesus called Judas a "devil" ([John 6:70-71](#)). But there would be little point in a resurrected Judas; how would anyone recognize him, since no one would know what he looked like?

A more popular view links the death and resurrection in this passage with Emperor Nero. It was widely believed at the end of the first century that Nero, who had committed suicide in a.d. 68, would rise from the dead. But it is doubtful that many Christians (especially the divinely inspired apostle John) believed in the Nero resurrection myth. Further, the beast will suffer violent death at the hands of another ([13:14](#)) while Nero, as previously noted, took his own life.

The **head** whose **fatal wound** will be **healed** can only be the future Antichrist. Whether his death is real or fake (cf. [v. 14](#); [2 Thess. 2:9](#)) is not clear. It may be that Antichrist is really killed, and God, for His own purposes, allows him to be resurrected. More likely, Antichrist's alleged death and resurrection will be a counterfeit of Christ's death and resurrection, staged, as one of the "lying wonders" perpetrated by the false prophet ([13:12-15](#); [2 Thess. 2:9](#) nkjv). Antichrist's resurrection will also be phony, since he never really died. Or perhaps Antichrist will explain his extraordinary powers by claiming to be the reincarnation of the Christ spirit, as some have suggested. Certainly, in a world where New Age pantheism and Eastern mysticism are extremely popular, more people would be inclined to believe in a reincarnation than a resurrection.

Whatever actually happens, the people of the world will believe that Antichrist, already popular because of his great powers, has also transcended death. Since the Tribulation will be a time where the world will experience death on a scale unprecedented in human history, Antichrist's seeming invulnerability to death will win him greater, more widespread acclaim. As a result, the **whole earth** will be **amazed and follow after the beast** (cf. [v. 14](#); [2 Thess. 2:8-12](#)).

## His Adoration

*they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"* ([13:4](#))

The world's fascination with Antichrist will quickly become worship. He will encourage and demand that worship by "exalt[ing] himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" ([2 Thess. 2:4](#)). Not content with acclaim, Antichrist will seek adoration; not content with respect, he will require reverence; not content with being hailed and heralded, he will demand to be

worshiped. And those who "did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved" ([2 Thess. 2:10](#)) will be deceived into worshiping him. That deception will be fostered by the Antichrist's associate, the false prophet, who "makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast [Antichrist], whose fatal wound was healed" ([13:12](#)).

Not only will the deceived unbelievers worship Antichrist, but they will also (wittingly or unwittingly) worship **the dragon** (Satan) **because he gave his authority to the beast**. By worshiping Antichrist, unbelievers will actually be worshiping Satan, the real power behind him. Some people will fully understand that; most will probably be deceived, like those of whom Paul wrote in [1 Corinthians 10:20](#): "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God." Thinking that they were worshiping the god to whom they sacrificed, the pagans were in reality worshiping the demon impersonating that god. So it will be for many people, who will think they are worshiping a supernaturally powerful leader, but in reality will be worshiping Satan.

As the people of the world worship Antichrist they will cry out in awe, "**Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?**" By blasphemously referring to Antichrist in superlative language reserved for the worship of God (cf. [Ex. 15:11](#); [Pss. 35:10](#); [113:5](#); [Isa. 40:18](#), [25](#); [46:5](#); [Jer. 49:19](#); [Mic. 7:18](#)), Antichrist's deluded worshipers will attribute deity to him ([2 Thess. 2:4](#)). The implied answer to both rhetorical questions is "No one!" In the political, military, and religious realms, Antichrist will reign supreme and unchallenged by earth and hell.

### **His Arrogance**

*There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. ([13:5-6](#))*

Like his master, Satan, Antichrist will be an arrogant blasphemer. Blasphemy will not be incidental but central to his operations. The phrase **there was given to him** refers to God's sovereign control of events ([6:4](#), [8](#); [7:2](#); [9:5](#); cf. [Dan. 4:17](#), [25](#), [32](#)). God will allow Antichrist to blaspheme to give full expression to the satanic wickedness that will cover the earth at that time. He will exhibit a total disregard for the true God by continually **speaking arrogant words and blasphemies**. Antichrist's blasphemy will not be subtle, but open, outrageous, and monstrous—even to the point that he "takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" ([2 Thess. 2:4](#)). This is reminiscent of Satan's original desire when he fell from heaven and holiness. He said in his heart, "I will make myself like the Most High" ([Isa. 14:14](#)).

Daniel predicted that Antichrist will be characterized by proud, arrogant, blasphemous words. [Daniel 7:8](#) says that he will have "a mouth uttering great boasts" (cf. [v. 20](#)), while [verse 11](#) mentions "the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking." Daniel further notes that Antichrist "will speak out against the Most High... and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods" ([7:25](#); [11:36](#)).

Antichrist's arrogance will surpass that of anyone else in human history. He will be Satan's mouthpiece, voicing his master's frustrated rage against God. He will also be the supreme

blasphemer in a world filled with blasphemers. So hardened will sinners' hearts be at that time that God's judgments will elicit not repentance, but more blasphemy. In [16:9](#), John records a vision in which "men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory."

Antichrist's **blasphemies against God** will include blasphemy of **His name and His tabernacle**, and **those who dwell in heaven**. God's **name** represents all that He is; it is the summation of His attributes. So comprehensively evil will Antichrist's blasphemy be that it will even include God's **tabernacle** (heaven; cf. [Heb. 9:23-24](#)), and all **those who dwell in heaven** with Him. Thus, Antichrist will utter blasphemous words aimed directly and specifically at God's Person, His abode, and His people, both the redeemed saints and the holy angels.

But neither Antichrist's blasphemies nor his reign of terror will last indefinitely. God will grant Antichrist **authority to act for only forty-two months** (the last three and a half years or 1,260 days of the Tribulation, the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy; [Dan. 9:24](#)). Antichrist and Satan will be allowed to operate only within the time limit set for them by the true Ruler of the universe. But for a few years, they will dominate the world.

### **His Activity**

*It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. ([13:7](#))*

Antichrist will not be all talk; he will also be capable of decisive, deadly action. Once again the text notes that Antichrist can do only what he is **given** permission by almighty God to do, thus stressing that God never relinquishes His absolute control of events. Because they will refuse to worship him, Antichrist will **make war with the saints and overcome them**; believers in the true God will bear the brunt of his murderous fury. He will perceive them as a threat to his **authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation**, which again **was** temporarily **given to him** by God's sovereignty. The result will be a worldwide slaughter of God's people (cf. [6:9-11](#); [7:9-17](#); [11:7](#); [17:6](#); [Dan. 7:25](#)).

Daniel long before predicted this widespread martyrdom of God's people. He wrote that Antichrist "will... wear down the saints of the Highest One... and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time [three and a half years; the last half of the Tribulation]" ([Dan. 7:25](#)). This persecution will begin in earnest at the midpoint of the Tribulation, when Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel ([Dan. 9:27](#)) and sets up the abomination of desolation ([Dan. 9:27](#); [11:31](#); [12:11](#); [Matt. 24:15](#); [2 Thess. 2:3-4](#)).

That Antichrist will successfully **make war with the saints and overcome them** does not mean that he will have the power to destroy their faith. He will overpower them physically, but not spiritually. Genuine saving faith cannot be destroyed, because "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Rom. 8:38-39](#)). Nor will the Lord Jesus Christ, who is infinitely more powerful than Antichrist or Satan, permit any true child of His to suffer the loss of eternal life

([Rev. 3:5](#); [Job 13:15](#); [John 10:27-29](#)). But Antichrist will slaughter God's people on an unprecedented scale as he expresses his world dominance.

## His Admirers

*All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints. ([13:8-10](#))*

As noted previously in the discussion of [verse 4](#), **all who dwell on the earth will worship** the Antichrist. (John here shifts from past tenses to future tenses.) The phrase **all who dwell on the earth** is used throughout Revelation to describe unbelievers ([vv. 12, 14](#); [3:10](#); [6:10](#); [8:13](#); [11:10](#); [17:2, 8](#)) and does not include everyone who will be alive at that time. Here the limiting factor is specifically stated; it is **everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain** that will worship Antichrist. Unbelievers, those whose names are not recorded in the **book of life**, will "perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved" ([2 Thess. 2:10](#)). Scripture also teaches that the faithless will be judged because they "did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" ([2 Thess. 2:12](#)). While the eternally elect are saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ([John 3:16](#); [5:24](#); [Acts 13:39](#); [16:31](#); [Rom. 3:22-30](#); [4:5](#); [10:9-10](#); [Gal. 3:22-26](#); [Eph. 2:8-9](#)), the nonelect are lost because they refuse to believe the gospel ([John 3:36](#); [Rom. 1:18-32](#); [2:8](#); [2 Thess. 1:8-9](#); [1 Pet. 2:8](#); [4:17](#)). Unbelief and rejection always indicate those persons whose names were not **written... in the book of life**.

Seven times in the New Testament, believers are identified as those whose names are **written** in the **book of life** (cf. [3:5](#); [17:8](#); [20:12, 15](#); [21:27](#); [Phil. 4:3](#)). The **book of life** belonging to the **Lamb**, the Lord Jesus, is the registry in which God inscribed the names of those chosen for salvation before **the foundation of the world**. (This phrase is used as a synonym for eternity past in [17:8](#); [Matt. 13:35](#); [25:34](#); [Luke 11:50](#); [Eph. 1:4](#); [Heb. 9:26](#); [1 Pet. 1:20](#); cf. [2 Thess. 2:13](#); and [2 Tim. 1:9](#).) Unlike unbelievers, the elect will not be deceived by Antichrist ([Matt. 24:24](#)), nor will they worship him ([20:4](#)). Antichrist will not be able to destroy believers' saving faith, for the Lord Jesus Christ promised, "He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" ([Rev. 3:5](#); cf. [1 John 5:4](#)). Believers have been in the keeping power of God since before creation, and they will be there after the destruction of this order and the establishment of the new heaven and the new earth ([21:1ff.](#)).

Believers are doubly secure, because the **book of life** belongs to **the Lamb who has been slain**. Not only the decree of election, but also the atoning work of Christ seals the redemption of the elect forever. Believers "were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold... but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" ([1 Pet. 1:18-19](#)). The Father will not undo the work of Christ in redemption (cf. [Rom. 4:25](#); [Heb. 1:3](#)) by allowing any of the elect to be lost. Jesus Christ is "to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" ([Heb. 5:9](#)), and it is not within the power of Antichrist,

Satan, or all the forces of hell to alter that glorious reality. The very saints that Antichrist massacres during his persecution of God's people are later seen triumphant and victorious in heaven:

And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

"Great and marvelous are Your works,

O Lord God, the Almighty;

Righteous and true are Your ways,

King of the nations!

Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For You alone are holy;

For all the nations will come and worship before You,

For Your righteous acts have been revealed."

[\(Rev. 15:2-4\)](#)

Antichrist may take their lives, but he cannot destroy their faith.

This astounding vision of the beast from the sea concludes with a call for spiritual understanding. The warning **if anyone has an ear, let him hear** is used fifteen times in the New Testament (cf. [2:7](#), [11](#), [17](#), [29](#); [3:6](#), [13](#), [22](#); [Matt. 11:15](#); [13:9](#), [43](#); [Mark 4:9](#), [23](#); [Luke 8:8](#); [14:35](#)) to emphasize a particularly important truth. In all its previous uses in Revelation ([chaps. 2-3](#)), it is followed by the phrase "what the Spirit says to the churches." The omission of that phrase suggests that the church is not in view in this passage, having been raptured before the start of the Tribulation (cf. [3:10](#)).

Here the phrase introduces a proverb that concludes this passage: **if anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.** This proverb contains important practical truth for those believers alive at the time of Antichrist's persecution. They are to depend on God's providence and not take matters into their own hands. Those believers **destined** by God's sovereign plan **for captivity** (imprisonment) are to accept that incarceration as God's will. They are not to resist or fight against Antichrist. Amazingly, the passage upholds the divine institution of capital punishment even by Antichrist's evil government, warning that **if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed** (cf. [Gen. 9:5-6](#); [Matt. 26:52](#)). God's people must not retaliate against their persecutors; there is no place now, and there will be no place then, for militant, aggressive, violent believers terrorizing their persecutors. "Those also who suffer according to the will of God," wrote Peter, "shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" ([1 Pet. 4:19](#)).

Instead of reacting violently, believers must exemplify **the perseverance and the faith of the saints**. They must be like the Lord Jesus Christ, who "while being reviled... did not revile in return; while suffering... uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" ([1 Pet. 2:23](#)). When believers follow Christ's example, noted Peter, "those who revile [their] good behavior in Christ will be put to shame" ([1 Pet. 3:16](#)). Those who are "reviled for the name of Christ... are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on [them]" ([1 Pet. 4:14](#)).

The message of this passage is clear. Let the monstrous beast from the abyss do his worst. Let Satan and his demon hosts have their hour. God controls the future and believers belong to Him. "In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" ([Rom. 8:37](#)), and we will triumph on that glorious day when "The kingdom of the world [becomes] the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" ([Rev. 11:15](#)).

MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - Revelation 12-22.